

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend WSMV-TV upon their outstanding "Unlicensed to Kill" series relative to the enforcement of DUI laws .

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to pay tribute to those exemplary news organizations that have exhibited a rare public-spirited dedication of resources with one central goal--to save lives; and

WHEREAS, WSMV-TV (Channel 4) of Nashville has conducted an investigation, relative to the enforcement of Driving Under the Influence laws which was so impressive that it has inspired legislators to introduce new DUI laws, influenced judges to change the way they run their courts, prompted the district attorney to order changes in his office, and persuaded the Nashville police department to reassign officers; and

WHEREAS, the in-depth investigation entitled "Unlicensed to Kill" was the product of more than three months of investigation and follow-up; and

WHEREAS, this investigation of drunk drivers who continue to drink and drive after 4, 5 and even 9 convictions included an 8-part in-depth series and fifty follow-up reports, stretching over a month and a half on WSMV-TV; this important investigation continues today; and

WHEREAS, "Unlicensed to Kill" demonstrated how the Tennessee drunk driving laws, which are promoted by lawmakers and judges as among the nation's toughest, are routinely not enforced; and

WHEREAS, the series also proved how thousands of Nashvillians convicted of drunk driving and sentenced to serve mandatory jail sentences never show up to serve their time; and

WHEREAS, "Unlicensed to Kill" has produced tangible change in the way the courts handle DUI cases: the Davidson County District Attorney's Office responded to the

investigation by ordering all record checks in DUI cases be performed by experienced staff after WSMV-TV showed that inexperienced workers missed prior DUI convictions and the Davidson County Sheriff ordered all convicted drunk drivers to serve their time in a more expeditious manner, not at a time of the offender's choosing, as had previously been the policy; and

WHEREAS, Nashville's chief judge handling DUI cases responded to a WSMV-TV editorial by announcing police officers would be assigned to follow DUI convicts to the parking lot in order to catch drunk drivers who drive illegally immediately after they leave court; and

WHEREAS, after WSMV-TV began airing this major investigation, the station assigned two reporters and two photojournalists to follow up their in-depth stories with daily updates, reactions and stories; WSMV-TV is presently planning more than a dozen major follow-up stories to "Unlicensed to Kill"; and

WHEREAS, Nancy Amons was the reporter and Gary Knox was the photojournalist for the November, 1994 "Unlicensed to Kill" series; and

WHEREAS, on the February, 1995 "Unlicensed to Kill" follow-up series, Nancy Amons and Andy Pearson were the reporters and Pat Slattery and Mike Todd were the photojournalists; and

WHEREAS, for the "Unlicensed to Kill" Special aired on January 28, 1995, Mark O'Neill was the executive producer and Diane Crabtree was the producer; and

WHEREAS, these exemplary professionals and the station's entire news division are to be highly commended for their dedication and courage in exposing the uneven enforcement of our DUI laws that hinders our fight against one of society's greatest problems; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we hereby honor and commend WSMV-TV of Nashville and the reporters, photojournalists and other news professionals who produced the outstanding "Unlicensed to Kill" series relative to the enforcement of DUI laws.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.